

June, 2002 California Legacy Project Update  
South Coast Spotlight on Conservation Workshop July 24 & 25!

Below is a brief update on recent California Legacy Project activities including: outreach and information exchange, data activities, contributors, and related items of interest. We will begin to send these updates monthly to our advisory committee members and to those who are signed up on our email list serve, The Watering Hole. To sign up visit our web page, <http://legacy.ca.gov/subscribe.html>

**Outreach and Information Exchange**  
**Spotlight on Conservation Regional Workshops**

The first **Spotlight on Conservation Regional Workshop** was held in San Luis Obispo for the central coast region on May 22 and 23. Almost 90 people representing a broad range of interests attended. The workshop generated a lot of energy and good information, and was a great success. A few highlights: Ruth Coleman, Acting Director for Department of Parks and Recreation discussed the importance of the Legacy Project for DPR and announced five free state park day



passes for workshop participants. At an Information Exchange room, among other activities, participants were able to view central coast maps of projected urban growth patterns, and they added 12 central coast projects to the Natural Resource Projects Inventory, an online database. In a series of lively small group sessions participants generated sets of criteria for terrestrial biodiversity; aquatic biodiversity and riparian habitats;

agricultural and grazing lands; rural recreation lands; and urban open space. Participants then saw a demonstration of how they could use computer models to turn these criteria into map layers and identify important conservation opportunity areas—in this example for protecting oak woodlands in the central coast. Secretary for Resources Mary Nichols attended the final session of the workshop to discuss the results with participants.

We have been able to set up a very effective Information Exchange Room at our workshops thanks to the original statewide mapping work of the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Conservation, the California Department of Fire and Forestry, CALFED, The Bureau of Reclamation, and the Missing Linkages Project, including the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The Information Exchange room is designed to facilitate sharing of detailed information and one-on-one discussions about existing data sets and conservation projects between the Legacy Project and workshop participants.

The next workshop will be for the South Coast region and will be held in San Diego July 24 and 25. For more information visit our web page <http://legacy.ca.gov/workshops.html>

### California Digital Conservation Atlas

The Legacy Project is developing the California Digital Conservation Atlas, a web based mapping tool that will provide access to geography-based conservation and natural resources-related data. Legacy staff met with GIS software experts ESRI in April to draft the design of this system. An initial design



outline is currently being circulated for review by departmental GIS liaisons, Legacy Project staff and other interested parties. Users of the Conservation Atlas will be able to combine existing information to derive new information, create custom maps, and download information to their own computers. The Atlas will be accessible on the web, you don't have to be a GIS expert to access the system and manipulate the data layers. The

Atlas will be up and running this August. See the Legacy Project web page for more details.

### Data Activities

#### Wetlands Inventory

A draft scope of work for the Wetlands Inventory has been circulated for review by a subcommittee and will be finalized so that digitizing and mapping work can begin this summer. In addition to Legacy Project funds, the Department of Fish and Game contributed funds, and prospects are good for more partners to join the inventory effort with additional resources.

#### Land Cover Update

CDF is working on contract to the Legacy Project to include recent Mojave Desert vegetation data into their statewide vegetation data coverage. This data comes from the Department of Defense's Mojave Desert Ecosystem Initiative project. The two areas still needing substantial update are the Central Valley and the Colorado Desert. The Central Valley data will be updated when the Bureau of Reclamation completes their vegetation mapping for the region this summer. CDF will be contacting the Bureau of Land Management to obtain and integrate vegetation data from their North and East Colorado planning effort.

The interagency Vegetation MOU group continues to work on developing standards for vegetation mapping and classification. Eight state and federal

agencies and UC are involved in this effort. The group has developed draft mapping standards and identified core information that needs to be described for each map unit (polygon, cell). Several minor technical issues still need to be resolved before sending this out for formal agency review.

### Existing and Emerging Conservation Plans

The Project's contractor, Vestra Resources, has been actively surveying local governments (including county planning departments, parks and recreation departments, and open-space districts) for information about ongoing conservation plans or data about significant natural resource areas in need of conservation. Some follow-up work is needed in the Central Coast following the San Luis Obispo workshop and attention is now turning towards mapping plans in the South Coast region.

### Land Ownership

Vestra has built on work that the CalFED program (<http://calfed.ca.gov>) started in updating a statewide coverage of public lands and private conservation lands. They have spent time cleaning up discrepancies in ownership boundaries and labels that existed in data sets coming from different state and federal agencies. Some of the data sets are out of date and we have been working to update them. We have also recently received substantial new data from The Wildlands Conservancy (TWC) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) about their lands. Vestra will work to bring at least state and federal ownership (along with TWC and TNC) up to date for a release of the data set this summer. State and federal agencies will have an opportunity to review the data prior to release. The Legacy Project is working with GIS staff from state and federal agencies to develop a long-term maintenance system for ownership data.

### Resource Status and Trends

One of the Legacy Project's goals is to generate a statewide picture of resources health and condition. Towards that end we have been working with conservation partners to develop a collaborative approach to monitoring resource health. We are looking for an approach that integrates relevant information from the many inventory, monitoring, and assessment programs that cover various resources and geographic areas. The Resource Status Assessment and Trends Methodology has undergone several internal review steps and is being finalized for submittal to the Legislative Analyst's Office on July 1. It should be noted that the scientific staff of many key Resource Agency departments have been intimately involved in helping craft this document.

### Analytical Maps

The Legacy Project has developed the following set of maps that are being presented at the regional workshops. The maps are based on existing GIS data from a variety of sources (see workshops update above).

1. Public Land Ownership
2. Public and Private Open Space

3. Important Farmlands
4. Land Cover
5. Forest Lands and Woodlands
6. Habitat Types that Occur Predominantly on Private Lands
7. Rare Species Diversity
8. Potential Habitat Linkages

### Contributors, Donations and Matching Funds

We are fortunate to have had a number of donations made to the program this year. ESRI has donated staff time and software. We have also had donations from the Packard Foundation and the Resources Law Group.

Without the co-sponsorship of key organizations, we couldn't have afforded the full costs of the nine Spotlight on Conservation Regional Workshops. To date, the following co sponsors have contributed a total of \$54,650: Environment Now, The Evan Frankel Foundation, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Trust for Public Land, The Wildlands Conservancy, The Irvine Company, State Parks Foundation, Endangered Habitats League, The Conservation Fund, Defenders of Wildlife, Remy, Thomas & Moose, and the Big Sur Land Trust.

Because of the intense interest in the workshops, we have had to increase the number of people participating, the size of the workshop space and the amount of materials produced. If your organization is interested in co-sponsoring a regional workshop, please contact Patricia McCarty at UC Davis Extension at (530) 757-8604.

### Related Items of Interest

#### Environmental Protection Indicators for California (EPIC)

The Environmental Protection Indicators for California (EPIC) project is a collaborative effort of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), the Resources Agency, the Department of Health Services, and an external advisory group consisting of representatives from business, public interest groups, academia, and local government. The project, led by Cal/EPA's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), is responsible for developing and maintaining a set of "environmental indicators" for California. OEHHA announces the availability of the following work products of the EPIC Project:

*Environmental Protection Indicators for California, April 2002*

(Available as downloadable PDF files or in hard copy or CD-ROM versions)

This [300-page report](#) describes the process for the identification and selection of environmental indicators that are adopted as part of the EPIC system, and presents the initial set of environmental indicators.

*Environmental Protection Indicators for California: Understanding Environmental Conditions through Indicators, 2002*

This [28-page document](#) highlights selected indicators from the full report, and is intended for a broad audience.

Both documents can be downloaded from the OEHHA website at:  
[www.oehha.ca.gov](http://www.oehha.ca.gov)